

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-3 (canceled)

Claim 4. (previously presented) The recombinant nucleic acid molecule of claim 6 wherein said nucleotide sequence encodes a fragment of at least 50 amino acids of NS4 or NS5.

Claim 5 (canceled)

Claim 6. (currently amended) A recombinant nucleic acid molecule comprising a nucleotide sequence encoding a fusion protein of hepatitis C virus NS4 or NS5 protein or any combination thereof, wherein said nucleotide sequence is operably linked to regulatory elements, said regulatory elements comprising a promoter, enhancer, polyadenylation sequence, and a 5' untranslated region (5'-UTR), said 5'-UTR comprising at least the 9 most 3' nucleotides of a 5' UTR of hepatitis C virus.

Claim 7. (original) The recombinant nucleic acid molecule of claim 6 wherein said promoter is a cytomegalovirus promoter and said enhancer is a Rous Sarcoma Virus enhancer.

Claim 8. (previously presented) A recombinant host cell comprising a nucleic acid molecule of claim 6.

Claims 9-16 (canceled)

Claim 17. (currently amended) A method of inducing an immune response against hepatitis C virus in a human uninfected by hepatitis C virus comprising administering to said human a recombinant nucleic acid molecule comprising a nucleotide sequence encoding a fusion protein of hepatitis C virus nonstructural proteins NS3, NS4, or NS5, or any

combination thereof, in an amount effective to induce an immune response against hepatitis C virus.

Claims 18-19 (canceled)

Claim 20. (original) The method of claim 17 wherein said nucleotide sequence encodes a fragment of at least 50 amino acids of nonstructural protein selected from the group consisting of NS3, NS4, and NS5.

Claim 21. (currently amended) The method of claim ~~18~~ 17 wherein said nucleotide sequence is operably linked to regulatory elements functional in human cells.

Claim 22. (original) The method of claim 21 wherein said nucleotide sequence is operably linked to a promoter, enhancer, polyadenylation sequence, and optionally 5' UTR of hepatitis C virus.

Claim 23. (original) The method of claim 22 wherein said promoter is a cytomegalovirus promoter and said enhancer is a Rous Sarcoma Virus enhancer.

Claim 24. (original) The method of claim 17 wherein said immune response comprises a cellular response.

Claim 25. (original) The method of claim 17 wherein said immune response comprises a humoral response.

Claim 26. (original) The method of claim 17 wherein said recombinant nucleic acid molecule is in a pharmaceutical composition comprising a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier or diluent.

Claim 27. (original) The method of claim 26 wherein said pharmaceutical composition further comprises a facilitator.

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Claim 28. (original) The method of claim 27 wherein said facilitator is bupivacaine.

Claims 29-33 (canceled)

Claim 34. (currently amended) A recombinant nucleic acid molecule comprising a nucleotide sequence encoding a hepatitis C virus ~~NS3-protein fusion protein encoding NS3 or a combination of NS3 with NS4 or NS5, or a combination of NS3 with both NS4 and NS5,~~ wherein said nucleotide sequence is operably linked to a promoter, enhancer, polyadenylation sequence, and the entire 5' UTR of hepatitis C virus or a fragment thereof including the last nine nucleotides of the hepatitis C virus 5' UTR.

Claim 35 (canceled)

Claim 36. (previously presented) The recombinant nucleic acid molecule of claim 34 wherein said nucleotide sequence encodes a fragment of at least 50 amino acids of NS3.

Claim 37. (previously presented) The recombinant nucleic acid molecule of claim 34 wherein said promoter is a cytomegalovirus promoter and said enhancer is Rous Sarcoma Virus enhancer.

Claim 38. (previously presented) A recombinant host cell comprising a nucleic acid molecule of claim 34.

Claims 39 to 46 (canceled)